

Aldous Huxley Dies Of Cancer on Coast

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LOS ANGELES, Nov. 23—Aldous Leonard Huxley, the novelist - philosopher - historian whose satirical "Brave New World" set a model for writers of his generation, died here yesterday at the home of friends. He and his wife had been living there since their home was destroyed by fire last year.

The eminent 69-year-old scholar and writer—and poet, essayist, playwright and brilliant prober into the human commonplace and the esoteric—died of cancer.

Mr. Huxley, the occupant in his own right of a seat at the literary pinnacle, was the grandson of Thomas Henry Huxley, the great popularizer of evolution, the great-nephew of Matthew Arnold and the brother of

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ALDOUS HUXLEY, NOVELIST, DEAD

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Sir Julian Huxley, the distinguished biologist and writer and half-brother of Andrew Huxley, who won this year's Nobel Prize for physiology.

Aldous Huxley had been ill for about three years. But, according to Dr. Max Cutler, his physician, he had continued to write until a week ago.

Mr. Huxley had lived here many years, and as one of the West Coast's intellectual leaders, he gave many university lectures over the years.

He is also survived by his widow, Laura Archera Huxley; a son, Matthew; another half-brother, David, and two grandchildren.

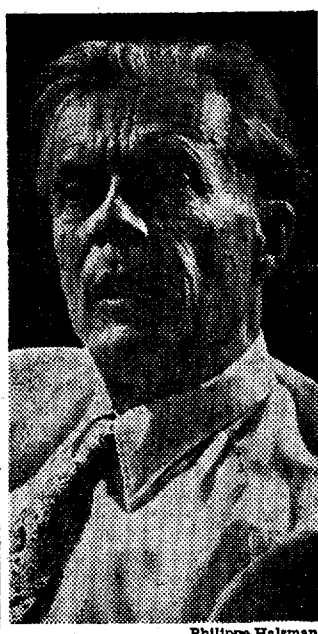
Called Himself an Essayist

Aldous Huxley once described himself as "an essayist who sometimes writes novels and biographies."

That was at a time when he had just finished his 42d or 43d book, was writing another, was preparing for a series of lectures at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and apparently writing forewords for any author friend who asked him to.

Although he was handicapped since college days by poor eyesight, the tall (6 feet 4½ inches), lean (150 pounds) son of a British family dedicated to learning and to science read enough books to fill a library. What is more, the books he wrote himself covered such a staggering range of subjects—from nihilism to mysticism—that they could serve as a solid nucleus for any scholar's collection.

Aldous Huxley never won the Nobel Prize for literature, although many thought him worthy of it, and his name was considered many times. But in



Philippe Halsman
Aldous Huxley

who dislike their work. I happen to find mine tolerably agreeable."

Everything was grist for Mr. Huxley's busy typewriter, and he had as curious a mind as had his grandfather, Thomas Henry Huxley, the famous biologist who was a friend and defender of Charles Darwin.

This curiosity led him to experiments in use of the Mexican drug peyoti, which led to last year's scandals at Harvard University over experiments in psychology classes with it and other so-called hallucination drugs. He had learned of peyoti on a trip through Mexico and wrote a book about his experiences, "The Doors of Perception."

Mother Was an Arnold

Mr. Huxley was born July 26, 1894, at Godalming, Surrey, and was christened Aldous Leonard (he early abandoned that second name). His mother, Julia Arnold, was a member of the British literary family whose shining star was Matthew Ar-

2 Faces to His Work

Huxley's Point of View Shifted From Skeptical Materialism to Mysticism

By ORVILLE PRESCOTT

The death of Aldous Huxley removes from the world of letters one of the most brilliant, learned and versatile of 20th-century writers.

His reputation had reached its peak with the publication of "Brave New World" in 1932. That blistering satire of a future civilization dedicated to comfort, sexual indulgence and complete control of the individual by the state was the predecessor of many later political satires, none of them as clever or as abrasive.

Unlike most writers, whose basic point of view remains unchanged, Mr. Huxley was a skeptical materialist when he wrote the brilliantly clever novels that made him famous, notably "Those Barren Leaves" and "Point Counter Point," and a mystic of a private sort during the last 30 years of his life. Mr. Huxley's mysticism was expressed in biographies, histories and fiction and seemed to many readers to be a combination of Oriental, Christian and personal elements.

Was Always Didactic

But whether he was writing the satirical comedies of his youth or the less artistically effective novels of his maturity Mr. Huxley was always a didactic creature even when he had no proper pulpit from which to denounce or to exhort. His learned, savage and eloquent discourses usually overburdened his fiction to a dangerous degree. Few modern writers have been more earnest, more learned in art, literature, history and science; but quite a few have written novels much superior to his as creative works of art.

The trouble was that Mr. Huxley was not really at heart

a story teller. Satire was a medium he felt to be his own. In the nineteen-twenties and early thirties he used it to express the scientific materialism, postwar disillusionment, hedonism and moral cynicism that were then fashionable among many intellectuals.

The characters in his early novels acknowledged no obligation and lived by no standards save their own tastes and whims, their own greed and lust. At first Mr. Huxley enjoyed their company. He appreciated their charm and wit. But in successive volumes he became more and more disgusted with his parasitic people. Finally, he reached a state of rage where he was skinning his characters alive and rubbing salt in their wounds.

Son His Own Vision

But moral outrage without moral conviction was impossible for him to sustain long. Horrified by the cruelty and suffering of the Fascist wars and by the Communist and Nazi cults of the totalitarian state Mr. Huxley seemed to see his own vision on his own Damascus road and thereafter to find refuge in his own interpretation of mystic experience.

Readers who enjoyed the satirical comedies did not necessarily take to the mystical books. Readers who might have understood and admired Mr. Huxley's mysticism did not always appreciate the urbane prose in which it was expressed; were sometimes repelled by Mr. Huxley's recondite references. The result was that Aldous Huxley was more popular, more critically admired and more imitated by younger writers in the twenties and thirties than he ever was afterward.

of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a prize awarded once every five years. And last year he was elected a Companion of Literature of the British Royal Society of Literature, one of the highest literary awards in Britain. It is restricted to 10 living British authors. Only 7 now hold the title.

Eye Affliction at 17

It was an eye affliction when he was 17—an inflammation of the cornea called keratitis—that forced a hiatus in his preliminary studies of medicine and finally their abandonment; the impairment was too great to permit him ever to peer through microscopes.

When, after two years, treatment permitted him to resume reading with the aid of a magnifying glass, he returned to school, at Oxford, and took a degree in English literature.

His near blindness, he once wrote, "prevented me from becoming a complete public-school English gentleman." "Providence," he added, "is sometimes kind, even when it is harsh."

He always regretted, however, that his infirmity, which made him rely on many others to do his reading for him, kept him from pursuing an education in science.

17th-Century Training

"I very much regret the scientific training which my blindness made me miss," he said. "It is ludicrous to live in the 20th century equipped with an elegant literary training eminently suitable to the 17th."

On graduation from Oxford in 1919 he joined the editorial staff of *The Athenaeum*, a literary magazine in London and married his secretary, Maria Nys, who had fled to Britain from Belgium in World War I. She became his eyes, reading to him, taking his dictation, doing his research, until her death in 1955.

Could Write on Anything

He remained with the *Athenaeum* and a house and garden magazine for a short time, but during it, he said, he wrote "a huge quantity of journalism." It was an experience he would not like to repeat, he said, but it did teach him self-confidence, the belief that with a little research he could write about almost anything with considerably more knowledge than most of his readers would have.

Mr. Huxley never liked the moist British climate, and as soon as his writing permitted—he published his first book, of poems, in 1916 while still at Oxford and had a best seller in 1921—he made his home in Italy or Southern France, wherever he could find the sun. That is why, when he settled in this country he chose Southern California.

("I stopped there in 1937 on my way to India," he said, "and because of inertia and apathy, remained").

It was during his early years in Southern Europe that he met and became a close friend of D. H. Lawrence. He edited a book of Lawrence's letters in 1933, after his death.

Mr. Huxley's two best known books probably were "Point Counter Point," written in 1928, and "Brave New World" in 1932. "Brave New World" foretold many things that have since become part of the lives of many—pep pills, television, opinion engineering and the unprincipled use of mass media for verbal seduction and subliminal persuasion. It was a skeptic's view of a changing world he did not like.

Enjoyed His Work

One reason that Mr. Huxley was so prolific was probably that he liked writing. He explained this himself once when a friend asked when he was planning a holiday.

"I rarely take a complete holiday," he said, "as I find that my health begins to break down as soon as I stop working. Holidays are healthful only to those

He was never a robust boy and his eye troubles put an end to any strenuous physical activity. He liked to walk, however, on legs a friend, Samuel Putnam, once described as "twice as long as Lytton Strachey" and with a physique that was "like a willow that swayed and bent not ungracefully, in the middle".

"Those legs, I was soon to discover," Mr. Putnam continued, "were built for perpetual and conversational motion".

Mr. Huxley was intolerant of the mental laziness of so many moderns, who start out as eager children, then get an "education, an analytic canalized, rational training that blunts their perceptions" and end up with "five hours of TV-watching every day."

Mr. Huxley had not been too active in recent years but he continued to lecture when his health permitted, and only last